

A  
DISCOURSE

Concerning the

East-India Trade

Shewing it to be Unprofitable to the

K I N G D O M

O F

E N G L A N D,

Being taken out of

An ESSAY on TRADE.

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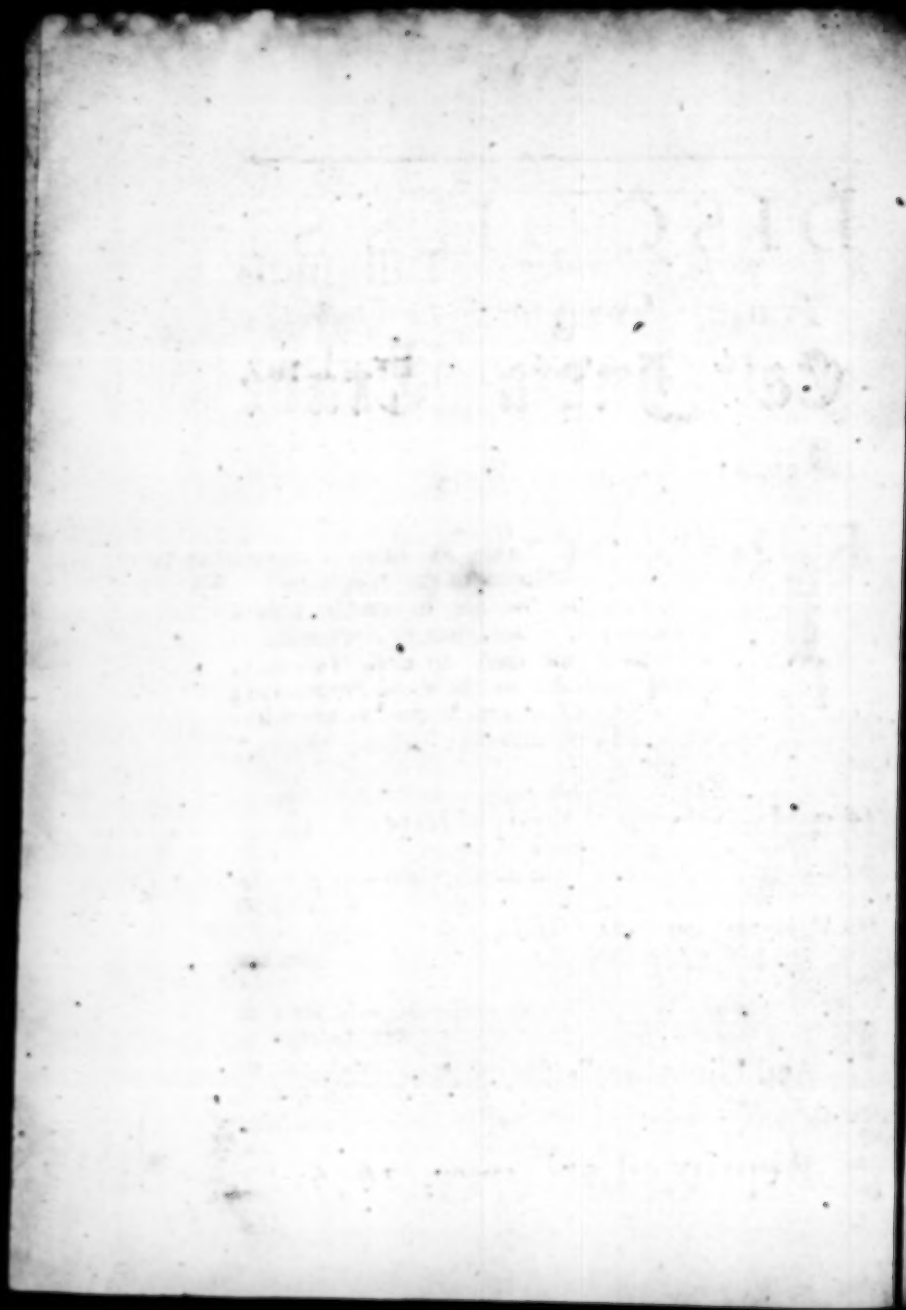
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*A Discourse concerning the East-India Trade, shewing it to be Unprofitable to the Kingdom of England, being taken out of an Essay on Trade.*

**T**HE *East-India* Trade, for many Reasons I *East-India* take to be mischievous to the Kingdom. *dis.*

To clear this we are to consider how a Trade may be advantageous or detrimental to a Nation, and then to draw Inferences thence applicable to the above Proposition; I shall therefore lay down such general Notions as may without dispute be allowed by all unbiassed Persons, which are these:

1. That that Trade is advantageous to the Kingdom of *England* which Exports our Product and Manufactures.
2. Which Imports to us such Commodities as may be manufactured here, or be used in making our Manufactures.
3. Which supplies us with such things, without which we cannot carry on our Foreign Trade.
4. Which encourages our Navigation, and increases our Seamen.

And consequently that Trade which exports little or none of our Product or Manufactures, nor supplies us with things necessary to promote Manufactures at home, or carry on our Trade abroad, nor encourages Navigation, cannot be supposed to be advantageous to this Kingdom; especially when its Imports hinder the consumption of our own Manufactures, and more especially when those Imports are chiefly the purchase of our *Bullion* or *Treasures*.

And because I would be rightly understood in my third Proposition, I mean those Commodities without which we are not able to fit out our Ships for a Foreign Trade, such as are *Pitch, Tar, Hemp, Sail-Cloth, Masts, Timber*, and such like; These are so absolutely necessary, that we must have them, though purchased for *Bullion*, as being the chief Hinges whereon Trade turns, and the Tools by which we Mechanically navigate our Ships, those Bulky *Mediums* of Foreign Trade; but for those things which are Imported, only in order to be Exported again as Commodities to trade on, these cannot be so advantageous to this Kingdom as they may be to the *Dutch*, who having little Land, are maintained rather by Buying and Selling than Manufacturing; whereas *England* being a large spot of Ground, and having a great Product of its own, ( besides what comes from our Plantations ) capable to be wrought up or manufactured here, gets by the Employment of its People, therefore it would be the great Wisdom of our Government to regulate all Foreign Trade by such Method as may best make them useful in the promoting our Manufactures.

How England may be said to be enrich'd by Trade.

Here it will not be amiss to consider again how and in what manner a Nation may be said to be enrich'd by Trade; for there must be a difference made between a Nations growing Rich, and particular Mens doing so by it. And I humbly propose that it may be possible for private Men to be vastly improved in their Estates, and yet at the Years end the Wealth of the Nation not to be a whit greater than at the beginning, and this both in an *Inland* and *Outland* Trade; for whilst the thrifty Shopkeeper buys at one Price, and sells at another to the prodigal *Beaux*, and the industrious Artificer vents his Labour to the idle Drone, and the politic Contriver outwits the unthinking Bully, one raises his Fortunes on the others decay; the same for our *Outland* Trade, if we Export the true Riches of the Nation, for that which we consume on our Luxury, tho' private Men may get by each other, yet the Wealth of the Nation is not any way encreased: For suppose by one Hundred Butts of Wines the Importer gets Five Hundred Pounds, yet when drank among our selves, the Nation is not thereby Richer but Poorer, and so much poorer as those Wines cost at first; for if Imported by *English* Men in *English* Ships we loose but the first Purchase, the

the rest being Freights, Customs, and Profits, are divided amongst our selves, but if they are brought in by Foreigners, the Nation loses all but the Customs; I take the true Profits of this Kingdom to consist in that which is produced from Earth, Sea, and Labour, and such are all our Growth and Manufactures.

To apply this now to the *East-India Trade*, we will first consider what are its Exports and Imports, and then inquire *Cui Bono*? Whither the Contest for this Trade doth proceed from a design to serve the Nation, or from Principles of Self Interest? Or whither the Members of that Company who strive so much about it, would if in other Circumstances still be of the same Mind? For Principles that are in themselves true are always so, we may change our Opinions, but they do not change their Certainty; I confess as the State of the Nation alters, so must our Measures in Trade, but then it must appear that the State of the Nation and not our private Interests makes us to alter them: Now when I find that it is not the true Interest of this Nation to advance the Product and Manufactures thereof, I shall change my Opinion.

First then to begin with their Exports; and here I need not say much, it's generally allowed by the Traders themselves that our Product and Manufactures are the least part thereof, consisting chiefly in Gold and Silver.

But it's alledged that in Returns they Import such Goods which being again Exported, do bring from Foreign parts much more Treasure in specie; which leads me secondly to consider what those Imports are, and what becomes of them; They chiefly are, *Saltpeter, Pepper, Callicoes, Druggs, Indigo, and Silks* both wrought and raw, many of which Commodities are very necessary as well for our Home Expence as to export again, others vastly prejudicial to us, as they hinder the consumption of our own Manufactures both Abroad and at Home, and this latter outweighs the former; *Callicoes* and wrought Silks are the things I chiefly aim at, and hope to make it plainly appear that those two Commodities do us more prejudice in our Manufactures, than all the Advantage they bring either to private Pursets, or to the Nation in general, and it were to be wisht the Wisdom of our Parliament would prohibit their being worn in *England*; else like

the ill-favoured lean Kine they will destroy the use of our Manufactures, which might be fitted to answer all the ends they serve for ; Nor is the lessening the wearing our own Manufactures at home all the Mischief *Calicos* have done us, their Importation having thrown out the wearing of *Silks*, and other *German* Linnens hath been attended with as bad a Consequence from thence, where those Looms which were formerly employed on weaving them, were thereon turned to the Woolen Manufactures, wherewith they not only furnish themselves but *Poland*, which hath made those Countries very careful to increase and improve their breed of Sheep, whose Wool was generally brought hither before, and used in making Hats, but is now much of it wrought up there ; for when we slighted their Manufactures they fell on ours ; whereas if we had encouraged the Wearing their Linnen, they would have still depended on us for Woollen ; This hath been a means to abate the Exportation of many thousand Pieces of Cloth, which would have brought more Advantage to the Nation than all the Trade we have driven to the *East-Indies*, and will never be retrieved till we return again to the use of their Linnens.

He that considers how wonderfully Fashions prevail on this Nation may soon satisfy himself how things of little value come to be prized, and to juggle out those of greater worth ; Fashion is Fancy, which as it hath of late Years brought in a disuse of our native Commodities by Imitation, so if our Nobility and Gentry would turn their Fancies to them again, I doubt not it would have the same Effect, and if our Workmen could receive Encouragement, no question the Genius of this Kingdom would soon reach to such a pitch, as to answer all the Uses of both those Commodities, even with a Thread spun out of Sheeps Wool ; It was scarce thought about twenty Years since that we should ever see *Calicos*, the Ornaments of our greatest Gallants (for such they are, whether we call them *Atassins*, *Shades*, or any thing else) when they were then rarely used, save in Shrouds for the Dead, and that chiefly among the Poor, who could not go to the Price of finer Linnen, and yet were willing to imitate the Rich ; but now few think themselves well dressed till they are made up in *Calicos*, both Men and Women, *Calico Shirts*, *Neckcloths*, *Cuffs*, *Pocket-Hankchiefs*, for the former

former, *Head-Dresses, Night-gowns, Hoods, Sleeves, Aprons, Gowns, Petticoats*, and what not; for the latter, besides *Indian-Stockings* for both Sexes; and indeed it will be a hard matter to put them out of this Fancy, nothing but an *Act of Parliament*, or humour of the *Court* can do it, the latter is the most natural means, and would easier make way to introduce the former, for besides that 'twould bring with it the Prayers of the Poor for those who have cut them out new Employments, it would likewise wonderfully tend to advance the Gentlemen's Estates, first by expending their *Wool*, and next by keeping the Poor at Work, who would consume more *Wheat* and *Barley, Beef* and *Mutton* in their Houses, and yet they need not fear having Labourers enough in their Harvests, though perhaps at a little higher Rates, which would be abundantly made up by an Advance on the Product of their Lands, besides what would be saved in the Poor's Rates, and it hath been a constant Observation grounded on Reason, that this Nation never thrives more than when the Labour of the Poor is at such Prices as they may live comfortably by it.

We will next consider :

1. How far the Manufactures of this Kingdom have been already made to answer the uses of *Indian Silks* and *Calicoes*, and what did encourage it.
  2. What farther Improvement may be made thereon, and the means to bring it about.
  3. Why the People of *England* are so much against their Native Manufactures as to be more in love with *Calicoes* and *Indian Silks*.
1. As to the first, I will go no farther than the *Act for burying in Woollen*; how averse were the People of *England* to it at first? as if the Dead could not rest easie in their Graves, if wrapt in our Native Commodities, or that it would trouble them *inter Hades* that they had occasionally given Employment to their poor surviving Country-men; no, the Fault was not there, Experience hath taught us that it's all one to them, and Time hath more reconciled us to that Statute, when we saw the good Effects it produced by putting our People on making so many pretty sorts of *Woollen Vestments*, as ornamental to the Dead, as the others formerly were thought to be, and of such different Finenesses and Prices,



ies, that Qualities are as easily distinguished by them; and since our dead Friends were to be dress'd in our native Wooll, we thought it most seemly to imitate them by wearing the same at their Funerals, hence it came to pass that our Mourning Attire was made of White Crape, a Garb not only Decent and Profitable, but Honourable to the Nation, as it both shewed our esteem for our Woollen Manufactures, and also how soon those employed therein could turn their Hands to any sort of Work.

2. Let us consider what farther Improvements may be made on the Manufactures of this Kingdom to answer the Ends of *Indian Silks* and *Calicoes*, and the means to bring them about; here let us see what Progresses have already been made, step after step by our Manufactures, to imitate, and in many things to exceed all they have seen from abroad; witness those noble rich Silks, wherein they have attained to so great a height; Our brave noble *Arras* or *Tapestry* of all Prizes, not to be out-done by those very Nations from whom we at first learned the Art; and this is allowed by all, that the English Workmen in great things out-do their Partners; and no doubt they may soon turn their Hands to a slight Manufacture, which People do now chiefly desire, and I take to be as profitable to the Nation; how are we come from a strong and stubborn to a slight thin broad Cloth; from thence to *Stuffs*, *Perpets*, *Soyes*, *Rashes*, *Shal-loones*, *Gauzes*, and lately to *Anterimes*, which last look as handfom as *Indian Silks*, and serve as well in Linings for our Cloaths; also *Crapes* of such different sorts both of *Silk* and *Wool*, that not only Cloaths for Men and Women are made thereof, but also *Hatbands*, *Cuffs*, *Neckcloths*, *Hoods*, *Head-Dresses*, &c. Now was there a Law to encourage, or would the Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom by their Examples promote the wearing our own Manufactures, no doubt they might be soon brought to answer all the ends of *Indian Silks* and *Calicoes*, and I cannot see what reason may be given against a total Prohibition of their being worn in *England*, which will be the quickest way to have them disused.

3. The third is to enquire why the People of *England* are so much against their native Manufactures, as to be more in love with *Calicoes* and *Indian Silks*? The chief Reason is Fashion and Imitation of one another, though many others



are alledged, as the Ruffness and ill Colour of Woollen, which keeps it from answering the ends of *Calicoes*, in Weight and Thickness, which renders it improper for the ends of slight Silks in Linings; These are not substantial but pretended Reasons, and would as well serve against *Calicoes* and *Indian Silks* were we more used to our Native Manufactures, and they now to be introduced; for as to the Ruffness of Wool-*en*, may not that be helped by its fineness? and are not coarse *Calicoes* altogether as Ruff? A fine Flannen-Shirt feels soft and pleasant to him that hath been used to wear it, so strange Impressions do Custom and Fashion make on us; and as for Colour, it is only Fancy, when Yellow is in Fashion it looks as decent as White, and as much Art is needful to strike it well as there is Curiosity about the other, witness when Women wore Yellow Hoods, both Men and Women Yellow Vestments, besides, no doubt ways might be found out to add to the Native Whiteness of our Woollen Manufactures, which do not therein fall shorter of *Calicoes* than they do of *Hollands* and *Cambricks*; and as to the ends of Silks Thinness and Likeness, I think our Workmen have given very great Instances in their *Crapes*, *Gauzes*, and *Antilopes*, what they could do had they Encouragement.

But if a Manufacture of *Wool* will not please, why may not one of *Cotton*, the *Primum* of which *Calicoes* are made, whereof we have great quantities imported every Year from our own Plantations in *America*, and no doubt we might in a short time attain to an excellency therein, not only to supply our selves, but also Foreign Markets; He that considers how far we have gone in this already will have no cause to doubt a Progress, and if Encouragements were proposed to that Person who should spin the finest Thread either in Cotton or Wool, to be adjudged and paid in each County, 'twould excite Industry and Ingenuity, and no doubt, we might in time make *Calicoes* equal in their sorts with those imported from *India*, and afford them as cheap as that Company now sells them, enough not only for our home Expence, but also for Exportation.

We will next see what Employment this Trade gives to Ships, as it's now managed in a Company, and how far it promotes Navigation by making Saylor's; the number of the first is but small, and I think far from making Seamen, long

Voyages being usually their Bane, those Ships seldom bringing home so many Sailors as they carried forth, whereas shorter Voyages do more, made out of Landmen, both the Employers and the Employed being desirous to make their first Tryah on such Voyages; besides, longer require better Sailors to provide for the Casualties which attend them, and may be said rather to use Seamen than to make them; and this is one great Reason why the *Dutch* raise them so easily, most of their Employments being a home Trade.

If then it appears this Trade is no more profitable to the Nation in general, we will next see how it is to that Company in particular; I do not say to the particular Members thereof, who by ill Practices have raised their private Fortunes, many of which have been lately laid open, but to the Company as such, and here we find that a former failed; the last is thought to have gotten little, considering the long time they have been a Monopoly; and what Advantage the new *Fund* will make time must shew, the Tricks used to engage Men therein causes me to doubt whether it will answer the Expectations of the Subscribers.

On the whole let us consider what Arguments can be offered to the Wisdom of the Nation to limit this Trade to an exclusive Company as was desired, or (as in Truth it is) to turn it into a Monopoly by Law, a thing very contrary to the Genius of the People of *England*, and seems to barr the Freedom and Liberty of the Subject.

Were Monopolies to be allowed it must certainly be in one of these three Respects.

1. That we might put off our own Commodities to other Nations in Barter for those we received from them.
2. That we might keep down the Prices of their Commodities, whilst we advanced our own.
3. That as the Consequence of these two we might encourage our Manufactures at home, and furnish Foreign Commodities cheap.

But when a Monopoly shall cause quite different Effects, it's not to be allow'd on any Terms.

As for the first; the *East-India* Company takes off little of our Manufactures, nor do I think the Trade will admit it, for I cannot see how that Nation can be supplied with Manufactures hence fit for their Wearing, answerable in Price

to their own, except they were a Luxurious People, who cared not what they gave to please their Fancies, which I do not take them to be, but generally very Provident; for if we consider that when the *East-India* Company hath brought their Calicoes and Silks hither with great Charges, and sold them at an extraordinary advance, they find vent by their cheapness, how can we believe that any of our Manufactures can afford them a profit in *India*, where they must be sold suitable in price to the others first cost; and therefore 'twould not be amiss if the Government were put on making a narrow Inquiry whether the Company do *hitherto* export so much of the Product and Manufactures of this Kingdom and land them in *India* as they are obliged to do by their Charter, else many ways may be found out to evade it, and the Nation be deprived of the only Advantage expected from that Monopoly.

The Dutch and we deal not either on the same Terms, their Manufactures are small, and so no Matter what they Trade on, besides, their Settlements in the *East-Indies* are so great, that what they bring thence may almost be called their own Product, whereof by monopolizing that Trade they make greater Prices in *Europe*, which being chiefly spent either in Foreign Markets or by Temporary Residents, brings them more Profit; They have also great Advantages above us in their *East-India* Trade, being possessors of the whole Traffick to *Japan*, whither they carry Cloth, Lead, and other Commodities from *Holland*, Calicoes, Spices, &c. from *India*, which they sell for Gold and Silver, increasing thereby their Bullion as we diminish ours: Besides, their *East-India* Company is not settled on such a narrow Foundation as ours, which being limited to one City, exclusive of all others, sells their Commodities for greater Advance than any other Traders, whither we consider their Risque, or the time they are out of their Money, which should be the standing Rules in Trade; Nor can it be otherwise whilst they remain a Company, the Charges both abroad and at home being much more than when managed by private Stocks, besides the affected Grandeur in all, which must be paid by the Nation, whereon I take that Monopoly to be a Tax, so far as it might be supplied with them on cheaper Terms if the Trade were laid more open by a Regulation: I know there  
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is much talk'd by the Company about Forts, Castles, and Soldiers, to defend their Interests in *India*, but I cannot see the use of them, for either they are thereby defended against the Natives or the *Dutch* their Competitors; the former have no reason to quarrel with them, for bringing them a Trade so highly their Advantage, as the purchasing their Produce and Manufactures with Money, especially if they pay for what they buy: And as for their Competitors the *Dutch*, if they were not better defended against them by our Fleets at home, and the Protection of the Princes they Trade with, than by all the Forces they have there, the Trade had been ill-secured, and must have sunk long ago; Only those great Words serve to hold us amused, whilst their *Guineas* in the two last Reigns were the Support of their Charter.

One thing which I aim at in this Discourse, is to persuade the Gentry of *England* to be more in Love with our own Manufactures, and to encourage the wearing them by their Examples, and not of Choice to give Employment to the Poor of another Nation whilst ours starve at home.

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**F I N I S.**